



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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TUNISIAN NATIONAL SENTENCED IN MARRIAGE FRAUD SCHEME

Judge orders man deported for sham union with former female professional football player

LOS ANGELES – A federal judge here today sentenced a Tunisian national to three months in prison and ordered him deported for orchestrating a sham marriage to a former female professional football player in an effort to legalize his immigration status and remain in the United States.

Mohammed Hrizi, 38, who has been jailed since December, received credit for time served. He is expected to be turned over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) later this week for removal to Tunisia.

Hrizi pleaded guilty in April to immigration fraud charges, acknowledging that he agreed to pay his “wife” \$400 on the day of their marriage, along with an additional \$200 a month for the duration of the union. Hrizi and Unique McKinney, a former defensive linebacker for the Los Angeles Amazons, tied the knot in the Silver Bell Wedding Chapel in Las Vegas in November 2002. A photo of the ceremony shows the 6-foot-3-inch bride towering over Hrizi, who stands 5-foot-7.

The criminal charges against Hrizi stem from an investigation by ICE. ICE agents arrested Hrizi December 2, 2004, after executing a search warrant at his Redondo Beach apartment where they seized documents and photos related to the case.

The onetime Tunisian high school science teacher was initially arrested in September 2002 and placed in immigration proceedings for overstaying his visitor visa. Shortly after being released on bond, Hrizi married McKinney, who was a customer at the Compton convenience store where he worked. In his plea, Hrizi acknowledges the marriage was fraudulent and that the pair never lived together.

McKinney has been charged in a criminal complaint with aiding and abetting in the commission of immigration fraud for her role in the case. She remains free on \$10,000 bond.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.